STUDNICZKA AT HOME TELLS OF WHAT HE SAW IN HAWAII

Enthusiastic Over Improvements on the Big Plantations, Modern Architecture, and Island Scenery.

Mr. Henry Studniczka, of 2012 St. Louis avenue, who has just returned from an extended visit to the Hawaiian Islands, to enlarge his fund of information on the sugar industry, is enthusiastic over the condition of affairs in the islands. He thinks they are a great acquisition to the United States. "The plantations," he said, "are in a very high state of cultivation and improvement. One, as an illustration, has two nine-roller mills of St. Louis manufacture, each with a capacity of 1,100 to 1,200 tons of cane in every twenty-four hours. This plantation will produce this year 33,000 tons of raw sugar. Its sugar house is equipped with the most modern machinery, and the value of this property alone is $3,000,000, conservatively estimated. In addition to a sugar house, a plantation of this kind has from five to seven irrigating pumps, at three or four different stations, with an aggregate capacity of 50,000,000 to 60,000,000 gallons of water a day. It is the policy of all planters to irrigate their cane, and it is plowed by steam machinery to a depth of thirty inches. The cane is growing and ripening eighteen months before it is harvested, therefore the yield is very high, often ten tons of sugar to the acre.

"The islands produce nothing but tropical crops, mainly sugar, bananas, rice and cocoanuts, and in exchange for these commodities they need everything and purchase everything that may be required for the successful propagation of their crops. The principal laborers in the islands at present are Chinese and Japanese, who have given perfect satisfaction, but the planters have now begun to look for new help in Porto Rico. Up to the time of my departure they had brought over four transports from there filled with laborers and their families. I should judge there were about 1,000 to 1,500 persons in each vessel.

"Honolulu, the principal city of the Hawaiian Islands, is one of the most picturesque places I have ever seen. It is building up into a magnificent city. Its present population is 40,000, which will doubtless be doubled in the next decade. Business blocks of iron, steel and granite, to the number of twenty-five or so, are filled with the usual offices found in our cities, all modernly furnished and appointed, the products of American skill and labor. The retail stores as yet are in the hands of the Chinese and Japanese. They carry large stocks of general merchandise, which compare favorably in quantity and assortment with those in this country. There are 159 miles of streets in the city district, or within the superintendence of the road overseer of Honolulu. They will average fifty feet in width, and for the most part are covered with macadam or telford. In the older portions of the town the streets are narrow and in places crooked, but in the newer sections they are laid off mostly at right angles, the exceptions being only in the hilly sections.

"Modern architecture is fast taking the place of the quaint native structures, the latter being still surrounded by palms, cocoanuts, bananas and other tropical verdure. Fifteen years ago there was, with the exception of two or three quaint stone or brick houses of the older white residents, scarcely a dwelling not occupied by royalty which could, save in stilted newspaper diction, be called a mansion without a suspicion of irony. The prevailing type of dwelling, inhabited even by the wealthy, was that of the plain, down east farmhouse of a generation back. Today there are whole sections built up where there were scrub jungle and burnt pasture, and built up in infinite variety of urban design, often ornate, but seldom tawdry, and having a wreath of coloring instead of the old-time rusty brown and tiresome whitewash. Houses, both stately and picturesque, have in the same period frequently replaced the antiquated roof trees of the older residential areas.

"A noticeable impetus to improvement in mercantile construction was given in 1886, when it became necessary to rebuild a large area that had been swept by fire. This principally lay in the part known as 'Chinatown,' and its borders. The business blocks are equally as substantial and modernly built as the ones in the United States, but not to such a towering height. Three or four stories are the usual limit. Elevators with electric power no longer astound the natives, and every modern convenience may be found in the city. Honolulu has an executive building that cost $340,000, and other notable structures are the opera house, queen's hospital, Masonic temple, Y. M. C. A. building, public library, public market, the Hawaiian and Moana hotels, and the Pacific club. In ecclesiastical architecture Honolulu has some magnificent examples. The Central Union Congregational church is the most imposing. It is massive and built of Island stone. Other denominations have splendid places of worship."

"Japanese female barbers attract the attention of every visitor to Honolulu. There are at least half a dozen shops in the city where women are employed, and I have seen strings of men lined up on the sidewalk awaiting their turns to be shaved. The women attain a remarkable degree of proficiency in their trade. There are Chinese and Japanese doctors without number, and they have an extensive practice among the whites as well as the natives, using the root and herb remedies peculiar to their own countries. The natives are tidy and clean, the women generally dressing in calico of loud figures and designs, while the men wear American clothing. They run to canvas suits, white duck coats and white cloth shoes. The natives are mostly mechanics, carpenters, teamsters and hack drivers, while the better class aspire to be politicians. Americans, English and the Germans have control of the wholesale industries of the Islands, and the best skilled workmen are furnished by these nations.

"The police department is efficient, conducted by natives, and in conformity with recently imported metropolitan ideas. There are patrol wagons in Honolulu, of the same pattern that you see in St. Louis, but they are not kept in such active commission. The city has a good street car service, with the line extending from the beach the entire length of the corporate limits. A branch line runs also to Pacific Heights, the new residence district on the hills back of the city. Nearly all of the secret and benevolent societies have lodges in Honolulu, and the Salvation Army sings on the streets there the same that it does here. There are a soldiers' and a sailors' home, free kindergarten, and Children's Aid Society, American Relief fund, Hawaiian Relief society, German Benevolent society, Portuguese Ladies' Benevolent society, and a full quota of churches.

"The largest industrial enterprise in the city is a finely equipped foundry, the Honolulu Iron Works, owned by a joint stock corporation. It builds sugar-making machinery, which finds a ready market over the Islands, and the work gives employment to several hundred hands. Only the very best mechanics are engaged for this department of labor, and the products compare favorably with those from any foundry in the United States. There are also two smaller foundries, a car building works, planing mills, manufactories of rubber tires, bicycles, etc.; but Honolulu will never be a manufacturing center, as neither coal nor raw material is accessible there, and the finished articles may be had cheaper from our plants.

"The system of schools is all that could be desired. The largest group of these is the Kamehameha, which embraces a seminary for native Kanaka young ladies, the building for which was donated to the state and endowed by Queen Emma. There is a well appointed manual training school, which is probably as thoroughly equipped in all its departments as Washington University. It is attended by the native Kanaka boys, and the building was donated and endowed by King Kamehameha VI. On its grounds is situated the Bishop museum, filled with interesting historical and native relics from the period of barbarity down to the present time. The costumes of the chieftains of all ages are shown here in contrast to the dress of the present time, and other object lessons of civilization's advancement are forcibly given the rising generations. The museum property was donated by the late Bernice Pauahi Bishop, great-granddaughter of King Kamehameha, the Great, she having married a wealthy banker of Honolulu. The Kamehameha schools for native boys and girls were founded by the conditions of her will. While she was a Hawaiian princess and eligible for the crown, she refused the nomination. The high schools are located in a magnificent building, which was formerly the residence of Princess Ruth, the last lady of the Kamehameha family. She donated it to the state for this purpose, and today it is one of the most admirably conducted institutions of its kind in the country. It is under the direction of Prof. M. M. Scott, an American, and a warm friend of Prof. C. M. Woodward, of Washington University. It is conducted much on the same plan as the schools of the United States, but in addition to the regular high school course it has attached a supplementary course of typewriting, stenography, bookkeeping and commercial law. The attendance includes Japanese, Chinese, Kanaka and whites, all occupying the same rooms. Prof. Scott surprised me by saying that of all the children the Japanese were the most apt and obedient pupils. Their behavior, he declared, was exemplary. Prof. Scott called my especial attention to the room when teachers were absent for several minutes. The same strict order prevailed, and not a child looked up from his or her books. They are placed on their honor and do not betray the trust. American children might well emulate the example of these sallow-skinned young boys and girls of the tropics."

Speaking of the inducements of the Islands for young men, Mr. Studniczka said: "There are no alluring prospects for professional men in the Hawaiian Islands. The number exceeds the demand now. Children born in the Islands are graduating from American colleges and universities every year, and, being of good families, they return home at the completion of their courses and open offices for the practice of their chosen professions, with all their native prestige, home connections and local sympathies in their favor. This is where they have the advantage over the young men from the States. The board of health is composed of strictly skilled physicians. They have offers daily from doctors who want to come to the Islands and experiment on the leper patients. These propositions are turned down as fast as they are received, for there is no health administration in the world more thoroughly posted on this disease than the Hawaiian board, it having made a constant study of the lepers in the colony on the Molokai Island. Several hundred patients are confined to this hospital, and the Islands will lay a fortune at any man's feet who offers a cure for the terrible disease. But the subjects are treated humanely, and their last hours are made as comfortable as possible.

"I cannot say too much for the Hawaiian Islands. They are the greatest acquisition this country has ever made. They export annually $15,000,000 to $20,000,000 worth of tropical products, such as sugar, rice, coffee, bananas, pineapples, skins, oranges, honey, canned fruit, curios and other things. The chief industry is sugar, conducted by joint stock corporations with capital ranging from $2,000,000 to $3,000,000. Rice planting is mainly in the hands of the Chinese, and many natives enjoy a life of ease from leasing their plantations to the Chinese. Coffee growing is an old industry in the Islands, but it has never raised itself to any magnitude."

Mr. Studniczka told of the reception in Honolulu of the news of President McKinley's death. "It reached there September 24," he said, "by the United States transport Warren, on its way to the Philippines with a number of printers and teachers. The delay of the news will illustrate the necessity of a cable connection between San Francisco and Honolulu. Inside of two hours after the sad announcement came, and without any publication by the press, every building of importance in the city was draped in black and flags pulled down to half-mast. Business was practically suspended and a mass meeting held that night was attended by thousands. The crowd could not get into the armory building, and the streets in front of it were congested. I never saw such genuine evidences of grief displayed by any people before."

Mr. Studniczka was accompanied to the Islands by his wife, and they were most cordially received. They brought home with them several large trunks filled with souvenirs and curios of Chinese and Japanese manufacture.

One of the most amusing sights that came under their personal observation was the array of flower vendors which greeted them at every turn. Young girls, women, old women, young men and gray-haired sires with great baskets of orange blossoms haunted them everywhere and tried to force sales by cutting prices. The blossoms were invariably arranged in wreaths and sold at a nominal cost. This is one of the industries that finds favor with the ambitionless native element.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.